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Missouri had third-lowest cost of living in fourth quarter of 2000

JEFFERSON CITY -- Missouri was the third least expensive state in which to live during the fourth quarter of 2000, according to the quarterly survey compiled by the American Chambers of Commerce Research Association (ACCRA).

In the final reporting period of 2000, cities in 46 states and the District of Columbia reported cost-of-living expenses. Missouri had the third-lowest cost of living in the United States at 92.7, down seven-tenths of a percent from the previous quarter's 93.4. This change was attributed to declines in grocery, utility, transportation and miscellaneous goods and services costs. Of the states reporting, only Arkansas and Oklahoma had lower cost-of-living indices.

"Missouri is fortunate to maintain a consistently low cost of living," said Joseph L. Driskill, DED director. "As the economy slows across the nation, Missouri should remain a strong competitor for new economic development opportunities as lower utility and transportation costs make it more affordable to do business here."

Missouri's larger metropolitan areas had COL indices that were close to the national average in the third quarter, but no city had an index over 100. Missouri cities reported as follows: Columbia, 97.1; Joplin, 89; Kennett, 92.1; Poplar Bluff, 88.5; Springfield, 92.5; St. Joseph, 92.9; and St. Louis, 96.7. Kansas City and Nevada did not report to ACCRA in the fourth quarter.

In general, the most expensive areas of the country continue to be Alaska, New England, California, and Nevada, while the least expensive areas continue to be the Midwestern and Southern states.

Chambers of Commerce in cities across the nation participate in ACCRA's survey on a volunteer basis. No cities in Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey or Rhode Island participated in the fourth-quarter survey.

ACCRA's Cost of Living Index has been published since 1968. The items in the index have been chosen to reflect the different categories of consumer expenditures, such as the cost for groceries, transportation, health care, housing, utilities and miscellaneous goods and services. Weights assigned to relative costs are based on government survey data regarding expenditure patterns for mid-management households. All items are priced in each place at a specified time and according to standardized specifications.

For more information, refer to the DED Research and Planning web site at www.ecodev.state.mo.us/research.